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EDITORIAL



These days it is taken for granted that ufology is the study of UFO reports and anything which in any way, or by any stretch of the imagination, appears to be associated with them. Those who take an interest in the subject rarely stop to consider that there is no such thing as a UFO, except in the technical sense of being something seen in the sky which is not easily or immediately identified as a familiar object or phenomenon.

Strange aerial phenomena have always been noted and commented on, but nobody thought of lumping all such observations together under one heading until Kenneth Arnold made his famous observation on 24 June 1947. Arnold told reporters that the objects "flew like a saucer would if you skipped it across the water". (1) Inevitably this got distorted, so that soon people were reporting saucer-shaped objects, or flying saucers. Arnold said that the objects he had seen were crescent-shaped.

It is interesting to note that most of the ingredients of the astonishingly persistent and increasingly elaborate UFO mythology were established in the USA during the few years following 1947. These included stories of sightings confirmed by radar, government cover-ups, the extraterrestrial hypothesis (ETH), mysterious, even paranormal, events happening to witnesses and investigators, captured aliens, and even conducted tours of saucers and trips into space for the favoured few.

The only major theme which took much longer to develop was that of alien abductions, which slowly developed in the wake of the Betty and Barney Hill case of 1961. The story

was sensationalised by the press and by ufologists, despite warnings from Dr Benjamin Simon, the Boston psychiatrist who treated the Hills, of the limitations of hypnosis and the tendency of people in such circumstances to tell "the truth as it is felt and understood by the patient". (2)

In the early years a certain spurious respectability was given to the ETH by the writings of Donald Keyhoe. He started off in his first book by giving a dramatised account of his attempts to get at the truth of various official UFO reports, interspersed with dialogue in which he and various other characters mulled over the various explanations, finally arriving at the ETH: "The earth has been under periodic observation from another planet, or other planets, for at least two centuries." (3)

In pursuit of this air of respectability, Keyhoe and his supporters were careful to distance themselves from those who claimed contact with the aliens, although he sometimes dropped hints that perhaps there just might be some truth in some of the landed or crashed saucer reports. This helped to deepen the aura of mystery and suspense which helps to sell UFO books.

Now if Keyhoe were right, then by now everyone would accept as an undoubted fact that alien spacecraft were in our skies, but this is obviously not the case. The reason for this sad state of affairs is of course the government cover-ups. There are many governments and the United States has obviously had a difficult task, over half a century, in persuading them all to hand over their crashed saucers and other physical

evidence, and helping them to debunk any UFO reports which might be hard to explain.

Is there any way out of this implausibility? Yes, of course. The aliens are in league with the various governments. This raises the further difficulty that there are too many people involved and the whole story would eventually leak out, together with compelling evidence to support it. So, these people in high positions in government must actually be aliens. This is possible because many aliens look just like us. (Only the more knowledgeable ufologists can spot the differences.) If we go further and assume that perhaps we are all aliens, then we come close to a complete solution to the difficulties. We also come close to having the experience of being led gently away by men in white coats (which makes a change from men in black).

To counter this sort of thing, there have been many attempts by sceptics to find explanations which do not offend common sense or contradict well-established scientific theories. These people have not been very effective, because most of them have their own strange obsessions and fixed ideas. One favourite notion is that if you investigate a UFO report you must come up with an explanation. This becomes the true explanation, and anyone who disagrees with it is a crank. An even duffer approach is the idea that nearly all UFO reports have the same explanation. They are: all stars or planets; all balloons or aircraft; all ball lightning; all mirages; etc. UFO books by sceptics are often amusing because of the curious hysterical edge to the writing. One senses the author's

lurking fear that he might eventually have to face something undeniable but inexplicable.

Is there no hope, then? Is there no ufologist who has seen through the fog of myth and prejudice and written a thoroughly sane and sensible UFO book, which is readable, but makes no concessions to popular credulity?

Apart from a few books mainly concerned with historical, social and psychological aspects of the subject, the only one that I know of, which deals mainly with investigations and explanations of UFO reports is that by Allan Hendry. (4)

Hendry carefully examines each case and usually finds either an almost certain or at least probable explanation. As he does not belong to that strange anti-religion of dedicated sceptics, he is not afraid to admit that there are a few reports he cannot satisfactorily explain. He makes many useful suggestions for those who wish to become serious UFO investigators. Of course, this book has long been forgotten by most ufologists, that is if they have ever heard of it.

Most people don't want to be bothered with the scientific, technical and psychological complexities involved in making sense of UFO reports. They want the space aliens and they will settle for nothing less. Thus, those of you who are young enough can look forward to another fifty years of lies, fantasies and delusions.

JOHN HARNEY



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PETER ROGERSON'S NORTHERN ECHOES



A few months ago I challenged Jerry Clark in the pages of *Fortean Times* to disprove the ETH. At the time I thought it was one of those things that you just couldn't do. It's not really the sort of thing you can prove either way, is it? However I now think that there is a chance we can do something very close to that.

Let me be clear that I don't mean to argue that there is no life of any kind out there, nor that there may not be powerful forms of consciousness on other worlds. What I do mean is that it is very unlikely that there are beings whose consciousness is sufficiently like our own as to be engaged on the same sorts of projects as we late twentieth century human beings: projects such as building spaceships and radio telescopes. One way we could test this is to see how robust our own consciousness is, and find out what happens to it if there are relatively trivial genetic changes. Will our human consciousness stay the same, or will it be transformed into something profoundly different.

These thoughts were summoned up by a remarkable TV documentary in which Oliver Sachs, the well known neurologist, interviewed a number of young people who had a rare genetic mutation known as Williams Syndrome. What this mutation had done, apart from introducing a number of physical changes, some requiring specialist treatment, was to produce a shift in the nature and consciousness of the world itself. Williams Syndrome people are oriented towards a world of language, sound and interpersonal relationships. Their vocabulary is far in advance of their chronological age, their sense of hearing sometimes painfully hyper-acute, and Sachs felt they had an extreme sensitivity to the feelings of other people. But coupled with these gifts are equally profound disabilities: a very poor visual spatial sense, and great difficulties with

mathematics and abstractions.

It became clear from the programme that Williams Syndrome people, when using English (or any other language) were subtly altering the meaning of words. They used the concepts of height and weight interchangeably and in what seemed like a surreal and exaggerated fashion. A boy described his beloved bees as being as wide as his outstretched arms. Sachs suggested this was the use of language to convey a great narrative full of wonder, but it equally struck me that it might mean that Williams Syndrome people used weight and size related words not to convey notions of abstract physical quantity, a notion which Sachs suggested meant little to them, but to convey something which might be rendered as "presence in the world" - not in the world of physical space but in an interior, psychological space. Weight and height would thus indicate power over the imagination and capacity to fill up that interior world.

Clearly, we are not dealing with a group of people whose abilities can be matched with those of the majority on some linear scale of 'gifted' or 'retarded'. Rather they are profoundly different, and their undoubtedly problems are largely caused by being obliged to live in a society to which they are not adapted. This sense of 'otherness' seems to have existed for a long period. Williams Syndrome was sometimes known as 'Pixie Syndrome' because the characteristic pinched look and upturned noses which it produced resembled drawings of pixies and fairies. Of course, what they really meant was that artists had used Williams Syndrome faces as icons of otherness and that the mature vocabulary of Williams children had evoked notions of changelings. This sense of otherness still persisted into our own times, as witness the suggestions some years ago in the

magazine *Magic Saucer* (a UFO magazine aimed specifically at children) that Williams children were the product of an alien breeding experiment.

Of course, such children are perfectly human, and they are a sign of one of the possible alternative roads human consciousness might have taken. This would have been a road which would never have led to spaceships, though it may have led to a language system so rich that our present languages would be little more than a set of articulate grunts in comparison.

And here we get to my point. If such a small genetic change within one species can produce a shift in consciousness in which, say, mathematics (the 'universal language' of CETI) does not develop, can we believe that creatures with a totally separate biological and evolutionary history - far more remote genetically from us than slime mould - are going to possess our form of consciousness and have our aims and priorities? Surely this is speciesist nonsense of the first order.

There's one other point. We should not rule out the possibility that equally profound genetic shifts in consciousness might exist without other obvious symptoms. Such a thought may illuminate many of the intractable arguments encountered in our pages and elsewhere. Perhaps 'believers' and 'sceptics' see the world so differently because their brains are wired up in slightly different ways, and they literally perceive and interact with the world in a different fashion. If you doubt that possibility, imagine staging a dialogue between Rupert Sheldrake and Richard Dawkins: Englishmen of roughly the same age, background and education who see the world in as profoundly different ways as possible. And you still think you could talk to Zeta Reticulans?

JOHN HARNEY

discovers that Budd Hopkins's latest book, *Witnessed: The True Story of the Brooklyn Bridge UFO Abductions*, reveals more about the disturbing directions in which the abduction phenomenon is moving.

HE CAN REMEMBER IT FOR YOU, WHOLESALE

The worrying thing about UFO abduction stories is not that people like Budd Hopkins insist that we should take them seriously - we do.

Over the years a number of thoughtful articles on the subject have been published in *Magonia*. Martin Kottmeyer discussed the types of people who report such experiences and their possible subconscious motivations. (1) Kevin McClure expressed his concerns about the effects of the techniques and lines of questioning and speculations indulged in by investigators on children involved in abduction cases. (2) John Rimmer wrote a book in which he showed, amongst other things, how UFO abduction experiences were related to similar, but more traditional, experiences and beliefs. (3) People certainly do have subjective experiences which often seem to involve being abducted by aliens, demons, fairies, or whatever. Such experiences can seem very real to the percipients. They therefore should be heard sympathetically, and if they suffer continuing distress it is perfectly reasonable that some suitably



qualified person should attempt to alleviate it.

If Hopkins were advocating counselling or psychotherapy for people troubled in this way and sought to place the notion of abduction by aliens in flying saucers in its social and historical context then we could only applaud his efforts. However, as you all no doubt know, that is not his position at all. He insists that people are really being abducted by real aliens and taken aboard real flying saucers.

Now if he were the sort of wild-eyed person who goes around spouting incoherent nonsense - you know, the sort of fellow who persecutes librarians or who comes and sits next to you in an almost-empty bus - then we could safely ignore him. But he is not like that at all. He is well educated, highly intelligent and can call on a wide circle of experts to help him with his investigations. He it was who introduced Dr John Mack to UFO abductions. (4) He has demonstrated, over the years, that he is capable of persuading other highly intelligent professional people that UFO abductions are a physical reality, as well as persuading many people, directly or indirectly, that they really have been and are being abducted. Thus he cannot be safely ignored.

It is therefore advisable to take a close look at his assertions, arguments and working methods, as they are presented in his latest book. The case he discusses caused a great deal of comment and controversy before the book was published, so it is advisable to look at some of the other publications on the subject also.

It is easy to get bogged down in the complexities of the story presented by Hopkins, and to be diverted by the mud-slinging between believers and sceptics which has appeared in various UFO journals, so I propose to concentrate on the two central issues. These are: Hopkins's assertion that the abduction of Linda from her New York apartment was a physically real event, seen by independent witnesses; and the methods used by Hopkins to enable abductees to "remember" their experiences.

Anyone who had not read the book might assume that Linda contacted Hopkins and told him about being abducted from her bedroom by aliens and taken into a saucer, and that Hopkins then conducted a

detailed investigation. But it was not like that. Lindo wrote a letter to Hopkins, dated 26 April 1989, which expressed her anxieties about what are obviously not unusual sleep disturbances - waking up, or seeming to wake up, with the feeling that there is some other person present in the room, and not being able to move. The familiar "sleep paralysis" routine.

Lindo begins the letter by saying that she has never seen a UFO, but that she has read part of Hopkins's book *Intruders*. She also said that she had consulted a doctor about a small bump on her nose and was told that it was cartilage caused by a surgical scar. She became even more worried about this as she insisted that she had never had any operation on her nose. (Not surprisingly, to anyone who has read any abduction stories, this bump on the nose, which Hopkins admitted was "almost invisible" soon became evidence of an alien implant.)

Only a few days after receiving the letter Hopkins interviewed her. He explains that he keeps his interviews informal initially, to put his subjects at ease. Only "when an atmosphere of calm and trust has been established" does he conduct more formal interviews, taking notes or using a tape recorder.

This is all very well, but it means that there is no record of what was said. When Lindo first met Hopkins she was obviously aware of his obsession with UFOs and aliens, and it seems not unlikely that he took the opportunity to inform her in more detail of his ideas and theories. Only a few days passed before he conducted his first hypnotic regression session with her. This unearthed a memory of her seeing a strange bright figure or object on a roof outside her bedroom window one night when she was 8 years old.

Now we come to the momentous events of 30 November 1989. Linda phoned Hopkins to tell him what happened to her earlier that morning and a meeting was arranged for 2 December during which she told him of being abducted through her window and up into a saucer where there was a table... But wait. Let us look at Lindo's own account of this event, which was published in *MUFON UFO Journal*. (5)

Lindo describes how a "peculiar feeling" came over her as she prepared for bed. "There was a strong presence in the room. Steve [her husband] was snoring away, so it



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wasn't him." When Lindo had these peculiar feelings previously she didn't know what to make of them. But this time -

"I began to feel the familiar sensation of numbness that I'd felt periodically over my lifetime, creeping up slowly from my toes. Only this time, having known Budd and the abductees for some seven months, I knew what it meant." (emphasis added)

She claims to have seen a strange being, but she does not describe it; she merely says: "...it was there, standing at the foot of my bed, staring at me!" She goes on to say that she remembered white fabric flowing up over her eyes and a sensation of something pounding on her back, then of falling into her bed. So, no abduction, despite having spent seven months being primed by Budd and his abductees.

When she retells this episode to Hopkins under hypnosis, the number of beings increases to four or five, but she still seems unable to describe them in any detail, despite prompting:

B: [Budd] You said there were four or five. I don't know what you mean.... Four or five what?

L: [Lindo] Four or five of those things... people.

B: What do they look like?

L: They're short. They're white and dark.

B: Are their clothes white? Is that what you mean?

L: They look like a lighter colour than the picture screen on my TV set.

B: What else do you notice about them?

L: [in a quavering voice] Their eyes. Very intense eyes.

B: What colour are their eyes?

L: [whispering] Black. They shine. I can see a reflection in them.

Of course, at this stage, Linda must have known what Budd was expecting and she does not disappoint him. She gives him a story of being taken through the window and into a hovering saucer. She doesn't have too much difficulty with the details, as these have no doubt been supplied over the previous months by Hopkins and his associates. At this point I think it is legitimate to wonder what sort of account Lindo would have given if neither she nor Hopkins had ever heard of UFO abductions and if Hopkins were

obsessed with some other interpretation of the disturbing experiences which many people sometimes undergo when suffering from various kinds of sleep disturbances. (We are told that Lindo is a chronic sufferer from insomnia, as well as these other problems.)

Take, for example, the case of Dr Arthur Gurdham, a British psychiatrist. One of Gurdham's patients was a woman who suffered from nightmares. She eventually told him of her "memories" of a previous life among the Cathars, a Christian sect in 13th-century France which was declared heretical and brutally stamped out by the Albigensian Crusade. It so happened that Gurdham already had a fascination with that particular historical episode, and under the influence of his patient he came to believe that he, too, had not only lived a previous life as a Cothar, but had also known his patient in that life. This obsession developed to a stage where he gathered about him a group of people who all claimed to have known one another and suffered together in 13th-century France, and who could help one another to "remember" their dramatic experiences. (6)

Hopkins, though, is not only unwilling to consider other interpretations, conventional or otherwise; he insists that Lindo's story is true because the abduction was seen by independent witnesses. The whole book seems to hinge on this crucial point.

This is where Richard and Don come in. The letter they wrote to Hopkins claiming to have seen a woman being taken out of an apartment window near Brooklyn Bridge by three "ugly but smaller humanlike creatures" in "late November, 1989" was postmarked 1 February 1991, some 14 months after the alleged event. Commentators have wondered why it took them so long to take action. The answer is fairly obvious; they had only recently learned the details of the story. If, as they claimed, they had noted which window the woman had emerged from, so could easily find out who she was, why did they wait 14 months before getting worked up to a great state of excitement about the incident?

Richard and Don were allegedly accompanying another person, referred to as the "Third Man" when they had their amazing and unlikely experience. (It is widely believed that this person was Javier Perez de



Linda 'Cortile': Sleepless in Manhattan

Cuellar and Hopkins refuses to confirm or deny this.) However, they were supposed to be independent witnesses, but it was revealed, in a letter purporting to be from Dan, that they also were abducted. It seems they were instantly transported to a beach where they were confronted by Linda and a group of Greys (the "Lady of the Sands" episode). Hopkins claims to have confirmed this story by subjecting Linda to another dose of hypnotic regression during which (of course) she managed to remember it.

So this left Hopkins without independent witnesses, but in November he received a letter from a woman, referring to an earlier letter which she had sent him in July. This he retrieved from his "box of unopened correspondence" (!). This woman claimed to have witnessed the abduction from her car on Brooklyn Bridge. Hopkins interviewed her but apparently without any hypnosis business, presumably because he didn't want to find she had also been abducted and lose his only independent witness. Dr John Mack remarks: "This is, to my knowledge, the only documented case where an individual, who was not him- or herself abducted, reported witnessing an abduction as it was actually taking place." (7) It is not true, however. Abductions are sometimes witnessed, in a sense, by others, but they are

usually rather unspectacular. For instance, in a case investigated by BUFORA, described by Nigel Watson: "Mr L had no known psychiatric history. The psychiatrist...thought that he had been experiencing hypnagogic hallucinations. This was partly based on the testimony of Mr L's wife who was present during these alleged events, and confirmed that he appeared to be asleep during his 'contacts'". (8)

Hopkins has answers for those awkward persons who ask why only some people had their cars stopped near Brooklyn Bridge and witnessed the abduction whereas others either apparently saw nothing or remembered nothing. He tells us that the aliens control who sees what and who remembers what and when they remember it. Thus all apparent inconsistencies can be dealt with by attributing them to the amazing powers of the aliens.

It does not seem to occur to him that if we take this idea to its logical conclusion, then our whole world could be an illusion created by the aliens. They could also dictate what would or would not be published about them, whether credulous or critical.

Hopkins points out what will be obvious to most readers - the highly theatrical nature of the events described. He is referring to the

abduction scene, but there are a number of others, mainly scenes involving Linda, Dan and/or Richard.

Hopkins wants us to believe that the theatricality is provided by the aliens, but others take the more plausible view that it is provided by the abductees, witnesses and investigators. George Hansen, Joseph Stefula and Richard Butler, in a paper circulated among ufologists a few years ago, likened the whole business to a kind of role-playing fantasy game. If we look at it that way, then we don't have to go along with Hopkins's assertion that either the story is literally true or that Linda has organised - and paid for - a gang of conspirators to aid her in perpetrating an extremely elaborate hoax. Both of these alternatives are equally absurd, of course, but Hopkins thinks only the latter one is.

Hopkins was somewhat annoyed by this paper and he wrote a reply to it in which he devoted much space to character assassinations of the trio, with sideswipes at "such dubious personages as Philip Klass and James Moseley". Apparently anyone who doesn't go along with Hopkins's absurd abduction theories, and says so bluntly, is a "fanatic". (9)

The principal "fanatic" is Philip Klass. Hopkins obviously loathes him. He quotes him as saying to the media that abductees are "little nobodies, people seeking celebrity status" and that this had discouraged some of them from coming forward to tell the world about their traumatic experiences at the hands of the aliens. He also remarks: "Science can only be damaged by the present level of McCarthyite intimidation." (10)

Science? What do the activities and ludicrous speculations of Hopkins and the other abduction enthusiasts have to do with science?

What does Klass, this "...dinosaur in the evolution of public awareness" who "...bares his hatred for UFO witnesses ever more nakedly" (according to Hopkins), really think about the abductees? His views are set out clearly in his book on the subject, published in 1988. (11)

Klass is not concerned with criticising the witnesses, apart from a few of them who are obviously seeking money or notoriety, but with the techniques used by Hopkins and the other abduction investigators. He points out how they have ignored the opinions of professionals concerning

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the limitations of hypnosis as a method of establishing the truth about past experiences. He discusses their technique of repeatedly hypnotising UFO witnesses until they get the abduction stories they are hoping for. He gives examples of abductees who later insist that they really did see a UFO but they have no good reason to believe that they were abducted.

Hopkins was particularly annoyed by Klass's challenges to him that if he really believed that people were being abducted and had any reliable evidence to support these claims then he should inform the FBI. Klass and other sceptics continue to pose awkward questions whenever they get the opportunity.

One of the most disturbing features of the work of Hopkins and his followers is the tendency for children to get caught up in the fantasies. Hopkins seemingly makes no attempts to exclude them from his investigations in order to protect them from ideas and beliefs that could cause them alarm and distress. He is quick to seize any opportunity. Take the case of the nosebleeds, for example.

Nosebleeds? Yes, I'm afraid it's all rather complicated; perhaps Hopkins thinks that if we are sufficiently bemused and baffled by the complexities we will give up trying to unravel the story and just accept what he reports at his own evaluation.

We are told that Linda woke up with a bad nosebleed in the early morning of 24 May 1992, and was soon joined by the other four persons present in the apartment; her husband, her sons Steven and Johnny, and Steven's friend "Brian", who all sat around the living room trying to stem the flow from their bleeding noses. The next day, Linda phoned Budd, who reassured her that "...this was no one's fault, that if it was UFO-related it was outside her control." According to Budd, this sort of thing is not unusual; it seems it was one of those things that abductees just have to learn to live with.

A few days later, Budd called Linda back to question her in more detail about the incident. He reports: "Since she said she still remembered virtually nothing but waking up with a bloody nose, I asked about Steve and her sons." (emphasis added) She then handed the phone over to her six-year-old son Johnny.

Johnny "remembered" the

nosebleed incident all right, but of course Budd could not know what Linda had said to the others about the night in question. And there is no testimony on this incredible event from Linda's husband Steve. It should be noted that there is very little mention of Steve in the book. One gets the impression that he thinks Linda is somewhat neurotic and that Budd is some sort of psychiatrist.

Budd went on to question Johnny about his dreams that night and found that he was dreaming about his imaginary sister. Naturally Budd seized on that and, to cut out the endless details, it developed that this girl was not imaginary after all, but Johnny was constantly being abducted by the Greys and brought to meet this girl, also an abductee.

I find it difficult to read such stuff without becoming nauseated. When I was a small child I suffered from nightmares, but my parents comforted me and reassured me that the monsters in them were not real and that they were only dreams. I believe that most children are treated in this way. Imagine the effects, then, of making it plain to children that not only are the dream-creatures real, but that there is no escape from them. Such an approach hardly seems therapeutic, to put it mildly, but this is the line taken by Hopkins and company. If they can persuade intelligent and more or less sane adults to believe such nonsense, the long-term effects on children hardly bear thinking about.

John Mack goes even further in this respect. Some of his subjects "remembered" not only their abductions right back to early childhood but even in previous incarnations. Thus there is no escape from the Greys, even in death!

What is at issue here is not the sincerity and good intentions or otherwise of the abduction enthusiasts. It is the long-term effects of their work on the people they deal with.

The important question is: What can be done about it? Well, persons active in ufology can do a great deal. They should spread the word that the UFO abduction game, like certain other activities, is definitely unsuitable for children. Magazine editors should eschew the practice of giving fawning interviews to abductee researchers. A particularly sickening example appeared in *MUFON UFO Journal* where the interviewer of Hopkins takes the attitude of one sitting at the feet of

Until the abduction game results in some tragedy which gets widespread publicity, I doubt if anything much will happen

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Witnessed: the true story of the Brooklyn Bridge abduction is published in the USA by Pocket Books, and in the UK by Bloomsbury, at £18.99.



Although there have been no recent high profile cases like Rochdale or Orkney, the Satanism hunters have not gone away. BASIL HUMPHREYS reports on recent activity.

It never RAINS but it pours.



The claims of Satanic Child Abuse hunters are seldom given space in the press nowadays, yet they are as busy as ever. The RAINS (Ritual Abuse Information Network and Support) conference at Warwick University on 13-14 September 1996 had an attendance of two hundred (two-thirds of them women), mostly professional carers of some kind, along with a few vicars, some survivors of Ritual Abuse, and a couple of sceptics who were careful to keep their views to themselves. An informal survey conducted by one of the lecturers revealed that all but about ten of those present claimed to have first hand experience of a Ritual Abuse case, and most said they had several. The speakers included Catherine Gould, an American therapist who had had patients recalling Satanic rituals ever since the McMartin case was first publicised in 1984; Valerie Sinason, editor of *Treating Survivors of Satanic Abuse*; and Tim Tate, who was the researcher for the notorious *Cook Report* on Satanism in 1989.

No doubt for security reasons,

tape recorders were forbidden, and the only journalist allowed was believer Andrew Boyd. *Sceptical Mail on Sunday* reporters were given a press conference in a room away from the rest, mainly rhetoric from Valerie Sinason.

The words 'Satanic' and 'Satanism' were not actually used. Rather, people tended to refer ominously to 'them', leaving it tacit who 'they' were. One woman explained the necessity for RAINS like this: "They're networked to one another, so we have to fight them with their own weapons." Just how far does

she intend to take this principle?

The emphasis is now on 'Multiple Personality Disorder'. This condition was not even recognised until fairly recently, and was at first assumed to be a reaction to extreme trauma. Yet it is now assumed that it is deliberately induced by the cults as a form of mind control. So far as one could tell, it was usually taken for granted that survivors of Satanism would not remember their experiences until they recalled them under therapy or hypnosis.

That the Satanists can wield mind control to this extent is used to explain

away the lack of evidence. Valerie Sinason mentioned a case where police searched for evidence to back a survivor's story, and found none: she said they had "interviewed the wrong alter [personality]". Two policemen from Congleton in Cheshire, who have had several Ritual Abuse cases in their town, have repeatedly dug up gardens where Ritual Abuse survivors told them the bodies of sacrificial victims were buried (I feel sorry for the gardeners of Congleton), but mysteriously enough, they have never found anything. It has not occurred to them that the survivors might be telling porky-pies: rather, there must be an incredibly efficient conspiracy to conceal the truth. Were some of their fellow police amongst the ranks of 'them'? Masonic conspiracies, inevitably, were mooted. Then another possibility was suggested: the survivors have been subjected to cult mind-control which is still operating. After giving information to the police, the survivors are programmed to telephone 'them' immediately and repeat it, so that 'they' are able to remove the evidence before the police can get there. A similar point was made by Catherine Gould: patients may move to another part of the country, but the Satanists manage to find them. One reason is that: "some alters are programmed to telephone the cult and tell them their new whereabouts when they move home."

All this was illustrated by the Californian therapist Caryn Stardancer, editor of *Survivorship*, who is herself a survivor of ritual abuse and "a member of a multiple-self system". Having announced herself as such, she briefly slipped into one of her little girl alters. She kept two stuffed toys on the front of the podium as she talked, which apparently were so useful in her therapy that she now takes them everywhere.

It is a myth, Stardancer said, that "survivors are neurotic people with empty lives who invent stories to get attention"; in fact, they haven't got the attention that False Memory Syndrome has (everyone in this field thinks that it is only their opponents who are getting the media attention). She knows it is a myth because she herself suffered, back in the 1940s and 1950s when she was a small child, and the hands of an inter-generational, multi-perpetrator cult, actually at least five cults who were conspiring together. These included: a Satanic Cabal

hiding under the cover of a Fundamentalist church; a Dionysiac group (who had survived underground ever since the days of ancient Rome) who "specialise in political manipulation through crime and blackmail"; a feminist Pagan coven; a youth gang who used Satanic imagery; and military mind-control experts who were affiliated with the Masons. She was able to bring in several other favourite conspiracy theories by giving them as part of the alleged cult's teachings: she says they claim the cult hierarchy dates back to Hermes Trismegistus, an early Grand Master, they built the pyramids, and they are in touch with extra-terrestrials, as is proved by the eye in the pyramid on the US dollar bill. Many survivors, she says, are programmed to believe that social unrest at the turn of the millennium will enable the group they are in to take control.

This talk won a minute's standing ovation. In response to a question from the audience, she said she was given the surname Stardancer twenty years ago by an Indian medicine man she met at a conference on adolescent schizophrenia.

Curiously, some of the patients supposedly continue in Satanism even while in therapy. Joan Coleman's first survivor once had to postpone her sessions by two days because she had been summoned to a Satanic court in France. When she got to the delayed sessions she described how two 'hoods' had taken her to a chateau, where a black cockerel was sacrificed, she was urinated on, smeared with excrement, and all the usual stuff, questioned, then apparently let off. Valerie Sinoson has a Multiple personality Disorder patient who, as a child, was made Satan's daughter and had "a goat's horn shoved up her bum". Her 'adult alter' still goes to rituals, returning with injuries, and she is now in a wheelchair. Though Sinoson and her colleague Rob Hale at the Portman Clinic were doing an NHS-funded study of SRA, asking "what corroboration?", it did not seem to occur to her that surveillance of such a patient could readily provide proof, if her story were true.

Sinoson also stated that certain crimes are committed at the full moon, mentioning the horse mutilations of a few years ago. Presumably this is meant to prove that they occur on cult holy days, yet the same observation has also been taken as proof that

astrology is true. The first thing that ought to be investigated is whether or not some crimes really are committed more often at the full moon. [Of course, if so this may be simply because perpetrators are better able to see what they are doing on bright, moonlit nights - J.R.]

The weekend was rounded off by Marjorie Orr, the astrologer and founder of 'Accuracy About Abuse', who devoted her talk to attacking belief in 'false memory Syndrome', which she says has led to the silencing of adult survivors, and is in danger of wrecking psychotherapy. There may be "a little exaggeration" on the part of survivors (those who describe mass murder, perhaps), but no more. The British False memory Society, she considers, is an umbrella group for organised paedophile rings.

It is likely that such conferences as this are self-propagating. One presenter related how in 1994 she went to a study day at Southampton University presented by Valerie Sinoson: 'Ritual Abuse: Does it Exist.' At first she felt "total disbelief" at what she was hearing, but by the end of the day she believed in ritual abuse. The following years one of her patients started 'disclosing' having been made to take part in Satanic rituals (during which devils and humans flew about in the air), hence by the time of this conference she was herself an authority on the subject.

Finally, it may be remarked that one piece of actual physical evidence was produced in the course of the weekend. A woman who was in the process of remembering the Satanic rituals she had been made to attend as a child awoke one morning, so she said, to find a box of voodoo dolls on her doorstep, obviously a curse placed there by the Satanists to warn her to keep her mouth shut. The voodoo dolls were shown. They were Guatemalan 'Worry Dolls', as sold at charity shops all over the country. ●●●

Some recent developments:

Several recent news items have shown that the debate over 'Satanic' abuse and 'False Memory' is no closer to resolution. The *Daily Telegraph* (March 25, 1997, p.6) reports that the British Association of Counselling has issued guidelines to its 14,000 members warning them of the dangers of creating false memories in therapy. Chairman Alex McGuire is quoted as saying that the number of people with

recovered memories which proved false was low, "but we don't know what 'low' means. It could be tens, hundreds or even thousands. There is no doubt that it is a genuine hazard."

The Observer (March 2, 1997) reports on a case where a 38 year old woman, Susan Lees, is suing the NSPCC and Birmingham Social Services for withholding evidence of abuse she suffered as a very young child at the hands of her father. She was taken into care and adopted at the age of five, and claims that memories of the abuse returned after hearing news reports of torture in Bosnia, then obtained Social Services records which confirm much of her story. Critics of False Memory Syndrome are claiming that this demonstrates that victims can forget their abuse then recover the memories much later. However this case seems to have little in common with others reported. The abuse happened when Ms Lees was a baby, stopped when she was adopted, and did not continue over many years, even into adulthood, as is alleged in SRA claims

In the *Guardian's Saturday* magazine section (March 15, 1997) a writer who appears to have links with the relevant Social Services department mounts a criticism of the action taken by a judge in Scotland in dismissing a ritual abuse prosecution in Ayrshire. Not having seen court reports it is difficult to know what happened in the case, and to what extent 'recovered memory' played a part. The implication in the article is that serious abuse *did* occur (an allegation which would presumably be impossible to make without the anonymity of individuals in such cases) but that prosecutors and judges were unwilling to accept the 'Ritual' elements, so the case fell. As in the conference reported above, mention of 'Satanic' abuse is carefully avoided. It is also apparent that the *Guardian's* writer disapproves of the lifestyle of the family concerned - 'travellers' who can afford a large house through exporting expensive cars to Thailand and the Far East. The fact that Thailand is a centre for paedophile pornography is carefully pointed out.

The recurrence of cases like these serves to emphasise the concerns expressed in *Magonia* by John Harney and Kevin McClure about the dangers of involving children in alien abduction stories.

JOHN RIMMER

25
YEARS AGO

In reply to Alan Sharp's *magnum opus* in the previous issue, both Peter Roger-son and Arthur Shuttlewood put pen to paper in the Winter '91 number. Peter made many pointed criticisms, which Alan responded to in like manner. At one point he describes Alan as writing like 'a nineteenth century contributor to *Practical Mechanics*. Alan Sharp, of course, simply regarded this as a compliment: 'People in those days had a refreshing liking for common sense!'

However Shuttlewood's letter was another classic of invective, and contained many Shuttlewoodian phrases which live on in the collective memory of *Magonia*: 'One notes with a quiet and understanding chuckle...'; 'puny puppets of Condon thinking are sunk without trace, and the MUFOB Mob (those people from the North who are blind to reality is a description I have often heard) are sinking in deep water'; 'out with the scalping hatchets and carving knives to cripple those whose views are more sensible and fair than your own, which are strangled in a one-sided-web of ignorance...'; 'what acid-tongued and one track minded minority groups like MUFOB fail to appreciate is that their voices are mere squeaks against the leonine roars of the majority.' Wonderful stuff, concluding: 'Mark my words, uttered without malice aforesight unlike those crawling over your bulletin like aimless spider-legs... Yours not unkindly, Arthur Shuttlewood.'

The first issue of MUFOB in 1972 saw the first of our restless changes of format as we moved from foolscap to A4 paper size. It also seemed to coincide with a period when interest in ufology was in decline, and the size of the magazine reflected this.

In just six pages the main article was a response from Carl Grove, one of the many lost great hopes of British ufology, to Peter Roger-son's advocacy of psychological theories of UFOs. Grove concluded that UFOs provide as great a challenge to psychological as to physical world views. I think few of us would disagree with that. ●●●

LETTERS



Dear Mr Rimmer,
I was pleased to see a further letter from Matthew J. Graeber and to have him put me right about his belief in the existence of the Greys and their abduction of earthlings. However, I did not get this message from his previous letter and upon re-reading it, find that it still conveys more scepticism than belief. He says that he was simply searching for an explanation as to why they should return abductees with their attire askew and believes the answer to be that they possess a sense of humour and that it's all done for a laugh. What's more, he has gleaned this information from my letter but try as I may, I cannot find even the tiniest suggestion of any such thing in my words. I think therefore, that Matthew's aspiration to understand the doings of an alien race to be nigh impossible when humans have the utmost difficulty in communicating their ideas to one another. Still, his droll suggestions and cartoon at my expense were highly entertaining and worth the misunderstandings on that account alone.

The night attire antics could be due to several reasons. The Greys could be unfeeling, clinical monsters who attach no importance to our individualistic style of dress or they could share at least one human characteristic and merely be incompetent or the most likely explanation is that this is the alien version of attention-seeking! As I said in my previous letter, I believe that they have a hidden agenda and the procession of bizarre capers stage-managed for our delectation over the years is designed to keep us looking in the wrong direction, or rather, directions, whilst they continue with their real purpose unhampered.

Matthew will be gratified to hear that, a few years ago, it was highly likely that a very well-known agency

was keeping an eye on my friends and me and our subversive activities. Age has since calmed me down somewhat and I have to be content with the odd letter of protest to my MP, or the press or whoever.

I see that no one has taken up my challenge to answer the two questions I posed about the night attire mix-up or why ordinary folk experience missing time. I am surprised that *Magonia's* "staff of debunking sceptics" could not have applied their "outrageous non-believing behaviour" and come up with something, however unlikely. To my mind, these two topics, out of the whole alien controversy, cannot be passed off as mundane events which have been misinterpreted, as can sightings, neither can they be dismissed as subjective, as the abductees are in possession of a stranger's clothes and the missing time is verified by relatives or by friends. As long as one small part of a mystery remains inexplicable, then the rest cannot be dismissed; therefore I say that the case for the existence of aliens is proven.

Yours sincerely,
Margaret Buckingham

Dear John,
I was surprised at just how predictable your behaviour has been; you have conformed with exactly the way I had hoped, and have published a major article rubbishing the Hutchison Effect, which is exactly what I knew you would do. I just did not think you would do it so robustly, and may have been a little more circumspect. But no, you jump in with both feet. You obviously let your heart rule your head.

You see, I have deliberately held the documentation back from you, the McDonnell Douglas, Los Alamos and the Max Planck Institute in Berlin on Hutchison's work, and can now publish their laboratory reports,

showing that the Hutchison Effect is in fact quite genuine, showing you up as being completely wrong. You seem to think that you are the only one who has doubted its authenticity, but there have been dozens of engineers and scientists from many different countries who have thought the same and explored Hutchison's work over the past fifteen years (you seem to forget it began in 1981) and found the levitation and energetic effects to be real. You, however, have taken a completely naive view and, frankly, I'm surprised.

Also, you have provided some wonderful free publicity for my presentation of the Hutchison Effect in the UK because I am at the stage with it now, that as long as you spell my name correctly, there is no such thing as bad publicity. Your article will fuel the debate about its authenticity, which is inevitable with something like this, and people will now be more aware of it, and want to know more. It certainly cannot harm book sales, which will please my daughter, as she is handling that side of things. As she gets the orders, I will find out if they saw the *Magonia* article, and let you know. Then worst thing I find, is for my work to be ignored, and as you are so predictably combative and aggressive all the time, I have in effect harnessed this. I think if you consider the wider view, I have come out fairly well, and will be using your article as a springboard. Watch this space.

I'm sure you're aware that you are known for your bitchy and biased articles that are full of personal antagonism. I certainly saw your stuff like that before you started on me. I am just puzzled why you should attack me from the word go. Before I walked into that pub in Putney, I had absolutely no contact with you for about twelve years or so, and after

seeing the open invitation in *Magonia*, I thought it might be a pleasant evening out over a few drinks. What appalling boorish behaviour you displayed, especially as I came there as a guest who had never been to a *Magonia* meeting. (What a joke! Three people and you! Some following.) Why? What had I done to you? The last time I had spoken to you was on a train coming from Waterloo many years ago when I was telling you about how I had tracked down a UFO Sam kite which had been flown from the Festival Hall roof. And incidentally, what a cheap shot criticising Tony Bassett's clothes in the article. What has that got to do with anything? No, your work does not contribute anything, but is just a vehicle for your personal comments and petty aggression. I am really wondering about your emotional stability; nobody I know behaves as you do.

Well, I will send you the next issue of *The Steady Signal*, which is my periodical. I have a few comments to be made about your appalling behaviour (international subscribers 300+ including Persinger). Oh, and John, and could I have another copy of *Magonia* for Hutchison and his company shareholders. I know they will deal with this in their own way - through litigation. Happy 1997.

Albert Budden, Brentford.

P.S. Watch out for the Channel Four documentary on my research, to be screened later this year, after my appearance on the Discovery Channel a few weeks ago. Also, my 3rd book commissioned by Blandford, probably to be called *Electric Skies*. How many books have you had published again John? What do you really contribute apart from bitchy criticism from the sidelines?

REVIEWS



Karl Shuker. *The Unexplained: an illustrated guide to the world's natural and paranormal mysteries.* Carlton Books, 1996. £16.99

A regional analysis which was originally intended to be an atlas (maps are included). It is basically, as one would expect from this author, a good solid book on cryptozoology to which has been added a variety of other mysteries. Some are well treated, others get a rather superficial treatment. Shuker tries to stake out what territory he can for cryptozoology, even making an attempt to annex UFOs by invoking Trevor Constable's ideas of sky beasts.

It is interesting to see Shuker, essentially a nuts-and-bolts man (or is 'paws-and-peel' the cryptozoological equivalent?) starting to go all paranormal at the edges. I'm not sure whether all the speculation is meant to be taken at face value, or is an affectionation of fortean whimsy, i.e. fairies developing spaceships. It is a visually attractive book, with plenty of pictures and glossy paper. Unfortunately it is also an example of the graphic fashion that is afflicting many newsstand magazines in which text is printed in a variety of colours on complex backgrounds.

Michael Craft. *Alien impact.* St Martin's Press, 1996. \$23.95 (£24.95 [sic!])

This book, subtitled "a comprehensive look at the evidence of human / alien contact" is a work of American 'new ufology' in the tradition of John Keel. Craft traces the notions of alien interaction through a wide range of

contemporary folklore and popular culture. A contributor to *Strange* magazine, Craft is clearly much more widely read than many American (and British) ufologists, and it shows here. The current obsession with abductions and crashed saucers, although referred to, is placed in a much wider context.

There is an extensive discussion of Qoballa, chaos magic, Kenneth Grant, H P Lovecraft, science fiction (with references to Ian Watson and Philip K Dick), and a discussion of *Twin Peaks* as a paranormal epic.

There are of course cultural differences. The author's involvement in a variety of 'consciousness raising' events and the genuflections towards psychedelic guru Terrence McKenna add up to a very different orientation. It also has to be said that it is not always clear where reportage ends and belief begins. Even so, without necessarily endorsing all the contents and conclusions I can recommend this book as providing an interesting alternative look at modern visions and beliefs.

David V Barrett. *Sects, Cults and Alternative Religions: a world survey and handbook.* Blandford, 1996. £17.99.

An informed and well-rounded survey which tries to tread the fine line between the hysterical condemnation of the 'cult watchers' and the uncritical apologists of the groups included.

There is perhaps some lack of clarity about what is meant by 'alternative' when such a long established, eminently respectable, and dare one say 'dull but worthy' group as the Unitarians shares space with more exotic fare. On the whole however the coverage is wide ranging and inclusive. Perhaps the only significant omission is that of political cults such as the followers of Lyndon Larouche. I would also like to have seen some of the extensive academic literature on alternative religions listed in the bibliography.

Of particular interest to *Magonia* readers will be the sections on esoteric and neo-Pagan movements. These include some discussion of the Aetherius Society and the Raelians. There is also brief discussion of the Satanic abuse controversy, reaching similar conclusions to those expressed in *Magonia*.

David Moorehouse. *Psychic Warrior: the true story of the CIA's paranormal espionage.* Michael Joseph, 1996. £16.99.

Let's get on thing straight: this book is *not* 'the story of the CIA's paranormal espionage'. It is an account of the author's claim that after being injured during military service he was enrolled in a 'remote viewing' team which was conducting astral spying on a variety of targets. In the course of this he discovered that American servicemen had been infected by chemical weapons unleashed by Saddam Hussain under the cover of burning oil-wells in Kuwait. The CIA is covering this up for reasons which are not explained, so Moorehouse blows the cover. As a result he is hounded, persecuted, driven over the edge of madness and forced out of the Army. Afterwards he writes an account which reads like a script for an *X-Files* episode, or the Hollywood film it is no doubt destined to be. It

has the ingredients: spooky goings on in both senses of the word, personal trauma, room for lots of sex, lots of tears and an upbeat ending. I can here the cash tills singing.

As you may have gathered, I'm not very persuaded by the story, though I imagine it is to some extent based on real events. We know that the CIA was involved in remote viewing experiments, and no doubt more books on this topic will be written. But this one is just too stagey, too pat and too implausible to be a halfway rendition of what really happened. As for the experiments themselves, I remain unconvinced that they were anything more than another barmy scheme in a long line of barmy schemes in which a variety of crackpots and con-men have fleeced the American (and not just the American) people of their hard earned money.

John Heymer. *The Entrancing Flame: the facts of spontaneous human combustion.* Little Brown, 1996. £16.99

Retired police officer Heymer avoids the shotgun approach to SHC displayed by Larry Arnold's *Ab/aze*, and concentrates on modern cases, including some he has investigated himself. He suggests possible mechanisms for the phenomenon, avoiding the wilder shores of pseudo-science, and insists that the 'wick effect' can explain alleged SHCs. While reasonable in tone, the book is marred by the author's very obvious chip on the shoulder about his lack of qualifications, we get pages of attacks on experts, along with 'I was educated in the school of hard knocks' type of rhetoric, beloved of bar-room bores.

Patrick Huyghe. *The Field Guide to Extraterrestrials*. Avon Books, 1996. \$12.50, £11.95.

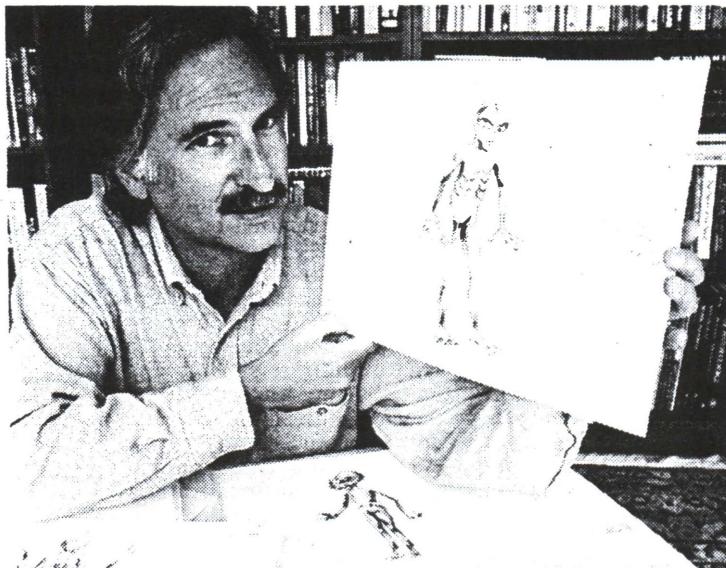
In the late 60's and early 70's Patrick Huyghe was the publisher of an excellent magazine called *UFO Chronicle*, which was one of MUFOB's earliest exchange magazines. Huyghe later moved into mainstream journalism, but has recently re-emerged in the scene as co-editor of *The Anomalist*. Now he has written this interesting, if not entirely deadly serious, guide to UFO occupants.

Styled after NANCY ARROWSMITH'S *Field Guide to the Little People* it contains illustrations (by Harry Trumboe) of 49 varieties of occupant, along with details of a typical case featuring each one. The collections shows how far from being dominated by classic 'greys' the occupant reports are. Huyghe divides them into several broad categories: human, humanoid, amphibian, robotic and so on, with sub-categories.

Of particular interest is the illustration of the humanoid reported by Morris DeWilde. This is now invariably portrayed as the prototype little man with a big head, but the original French newspaper drawing on which Trumboe's illustration is based shows something completely robotic, closer to *Star Wars*' R2D2.

Of the cases mentioned, I can add some further details to the incident at Saltwood, near Hythe on November 16, 1963. Huyghe follows the standard account of a shambling, winged 'mothman'-type creature based on the report in *The Humanoids*, by Charles Bowen. However a long-forgotten investigation by the equally long-forgotten Charles Strickland of the London UFO Research Organisation (one of BUFORA's ancestors) came up with a very different description from one of the witnesses. This describes a 'man with a scarlet cloak with a flickering lantern giving a white light, held to his left, the upper part of his body in the gloom'. Strickland also reported that from the November 21 onwards other groups of teenagers reported strange myths, shooting stars, a human figure 6 feet tall which disappeared. On one occasion a girl walking towards a light saw a dark figure, fled, the blacked out. (INTCAT, quoting LUFORO Bulletin, iv, 5, p.2)

Huyghe comes to rather non-



Patrick Huyghe: Hunting aliens by the book

committal conclusions but I doubt he would disagree too much with the view that the shifting, protean nature of such accounts points to the human imagination as the origin of these images.

John A Keel. *Operation Trojan Horse*, Illuminet, PO Box 2808, Lilburne, GA 30236, USA. \$16.95.

How do you review the book which blew our minds a lifetime ago in what Keel calls in his brief preface to this new edition, "the golden age of Fortean". Did he really believe in the elementals as pockets of intelligent electromagnetic energy or as shape-shifting boggarts, or were they symbols of human psychology and culture? Or where they metaphors for perceptual failings, prejudices, belief systems and other monocles of the mind?

Critics, taking Keel at his most literal, have had a field day pointing out the numerous errors and shortcomings of OTH. But perhaps we should not judge pioneering works like OTH (and *Passport to Magonia*) by today's standards, but see them as products of their time: naive, over-enthusiastic, but blowing the cobwebs off nuts and bolts ufology. For years OTH and what it represented was out of fashion to be replaced, during the Second Cold War of the 80's with the revival of crashed saucers, military conspiracies and the like. Now the nuts and bolts hard men are going soft at the edges; but they are pursuing a new, post-secularist, literalism of their own. But as Keel says at the end of his preface: "As this shell-shocked century draws to a close we are not

confronting some splendid extraterrestrial civilisation, we are facing ourselves."

If you don't have your own treasured, well-thumbed copy of the 1970 edition, buy this now. My only caveat is the lack of a bibliography.

Molly Cox-Chapman. *Glimpses of Heaven: the near-death experience*. Robert Hale, 1996. £15.99.

Another collection of NDE narratives aiming to show "what heaven is like", and like so many of these studies one in which critical analysis is not only absent, but frankly discouraged.

What struck me in reading not only this book, but many of its predecessors, is that like many other visionary narratives NDE stories are becoming progressively more complex and desecularised. Glimpses of other worlds are growing, as is more overt religious imagery.

What researchers in this field seem not always to grasp is that we are dealing not so much with near-death experiences, but with near-death memories. I suspect we should view these narratives as works of art, assembled from fragments of experience, memory, things seen or read, and crafted into a culturally formatted story, a form of modern folklore.

The folkloric nature of at least some NDE stories is borne out by at least one account presented in this book. We are told (p.8) that one Madeline Lawrence, Director of Nursing Research in Hartford Hospital (presumably Hartford, Connecticut) whilst undertaking a survey of coma

patients encountered one who described floating over her body and viewing the medical efforts being made to revive her. She then felt herself being pulled up through several floors of the hospital building until she found herself outside above the roof. She was enjoying the view of the city's skyline at night when out of the corner of her eye she saw a red shoe. On waking she told the story to medical staff who instructed the janitor to investigate. Lo and behold he found the shoe on the roof.

The only problem with this tale is that it is clearly a somewhat mutilated version of a tale told by Kimberley Clark, a social worker at Horborough Medical Center, Seattle. (see Susan Blackmore, *Dying To Live*, pp.127-8) In the Clark version of the story the percipient was 'Moria', a migrant worker. After a heart attack 'Moria' sees her resurrection procedure and floats out of the room to a third floor ledge. There she encounters a tennis shoe. Afterwards she tells her story to Ms Clark who sets out to recover the shoe herself. Peering through the window she notices that, as 'Moria' said the little toe had worn through part of the shoe and the lace was stuck behind the heel.

Sue Blackmore tried to track down the Seattle story, but concluded: "This is one of those cases for which I have been unable to get any further information". One must suspect that now, whatever its origins, it is a free-floating folk story which will be, in various versions, attached to yet more hospitals.

Though NDE narrators claim to experience social pressures not to reveal their experiences, it seems to me that now the pressure may be going the other way. There seems to be a strong belief that people who have undergone a cardiac arrest ought to produce some sort of revelatory experience, and if they do not there must be something wrong with them, or that their memories are somehow inadequate.

In describing the often moving stories that make up this book as 'works of art' I am not trying to denigrate them. Confronting issues of deep profundity is one of the principle functions of art. I hope rather this description steers between the naive literalism of believers and the often emphatic dismissals of sceptics.

Curt Sutherly. *Strange Encounters: UFOs, aliens and monsters among us.* Llewellyn, 1996. £4.99

The return of another figure from the early seventies. Sutherly was a regular contributor to another of our early exchange magazines, the excellent *Caveat Emptor*. This book collects a wide range of essays and commentaries on ufology, cryptozoology and general Forteana, with a healthy scepticism for the ETH.

Sutherly hints at the fear which the psycho-social hypothesis invokes. It's much easier for the things you fear to be scapegoats 'out there' which some gung-ho military type can exorcise with an exocet, rather than the beasts in your own head. Once the ETH was abandoned ufologists turned to some very strange and manic ideas in which they thought that they could program their own reality. This led to the fear that they were being persecuted by monsters from their own unconscious. In the early to mid 1970's some very curious things happened to ufologists on both sides of the Atlantic. Whether this was down to reading too much John Keel, or other causes, is a moot point.

It is good to see some of the voices of the seventies returning to provide an antidote to Hopkins and the rest.

Alexander Imich (ed.) *Incredible Tales of the Paranormal: documented accounts of poltergeists, levitations, phantoms & other phenomena.* Bramble Books, 1965. £11.95.

The bulk of this book is about something rarely encountered these days outside the pages of the products of the vanity press: physical mediumship. It includes accounts of Carmen Mirobelli, Indridi Indridason, Matylda Skrzetuska and Téofil Modrzejewski. Herein are recounted wonders without measure, including levitations, materialisations, apports - including those of people - strange lights and raps. The full monty.

If only a fraction of what is claimed in this book really happened as described, then *everything* we know about the world is wrong. This puts it in a very different category from most Fortean and paranormal claims. If a plesiosaur were to be found in Loch Ness tomorrow, a gigantopithecus would walk into the offices of the Oregon Herald, John Major would spontaneously combust, or the spaceships landed on the White House lawn, we would be astounded, as all these things are vanishingly improbable, but the broad canvas of our understanding of the universe would remain unshaken. Telepathy, clairvoyance, even precognition could slip through some fuzzy boundaries of quantum physics. But the stuff in this book would totally collapse science.

With such a dramatic claim we would need a huge volume of extraordinary evidence, hundreds of videotapes of seances with dozens of

mediums, before we had anything to set against the weight on consensus reality. Rather, what we do get are stories of things that happened in faraway places a long time ago. Even taking these stories at anything like face value still leaves trickery as the only possible explanation. What are the alternatives? Why should spirits of the departed engage in ridiculous party tricks? If these abilities are natural human ones, why are they not put to practical use? Ectoplasm would make an excellent emergency wound dressing.

I can surely say that never while reading this book did I ever feel for a moment that I was doing anything other than reading accounts of conjuring tricks. The hilarious photographs at the front of the book, for instance a man with a bag over his head, were even less convincing. What did strike me, particularly in the accounts of Matylda Skrzetuska's seances, was that the idea of the sitters as a passive audience to a performing medium was quite wrong. In many cases the audience are the ones playing the tricks.

This suggests that the real significance of these seances was a social one: in the anonymous darkness of the seance room otherwise staid people could let their hair down and indulge in a wide range of horseplay and sexual encounter. When infra-red photography brought the end of anonymity this brought discomfort and embarrassment not just for the medium. Equally, physical mediumship seances have been put out of business by television, other forms of entertainment, and changing sexual mores.

Jenny Randles. *The Paranormal Sourcebook: the comprehensive guide to strange phenomena worldwide.* Piatkus, 1996. £9.99

A round-up of a wide range of Fortean and paranormal phenomena, with brief histories, current examples, and practical advice on investigation. The material is reasonably presented and there is a lot of useful advice and some interesting cases. The problem is that it is not 'comprehensive', and while Randles does well in her bibliography of cryptozoology and

poltergeists, for example, in other areas such as psychic research she manages to avoid nearly everything of value, while invoking dross such as Barden's *Psychic Pets*. (Putting my money where my mouth is, I'd start with Richard Broughton's *Parapsychology, the controversial science* (1991) and James Alcock's *Parapsychology, Science or Magic* (1981) as giving comprehensive, reasonable and non-polemical arguments, pro and con). But I don't want to end on a sour note, with some revision and rather more reading round the subjects, future editions could make really useful introductions.

Jane Goldman. *The X-Files Book of the Unexplained, Vol II.* Simon and Schuster, 1996. £17.99 (but being heavily discounted in many shops).

With a title like this you expect an exploitation piece. What you get, woven around *X-Files* scripts, is a rather good, sane, balanced introduction to the Fortean/paranormal field. The volume covers topics such as freaks (done quite tastefully), conspiracy theories, urban legends, mass hysteria, weather anomalies, CETI and a very sensible piece on abductions.

Not always easy going (not helped by being yet another victim of the fashion for printing text on dark backgrounds), but if *X-Files* fans are tempted to extend their knowledge of the paranormal they could do a lot worse than buy this volume, and its predecessor.

Matthew Fox and Rupert Sheldrake. *The Physics of Angels: exploring the realm where science and spirit meet.* Harper Collins, 1996. £9.99

When I received a review copy of this book I at first assumed that the title was meant metaphorically, and expected to be reviewing some interesting if contentious fringe physics. But no, it is meant literally: these guys believe in angels and this is an attempt to interpret the ideas of Thomas Aquinas, Hildegard of Bingen and Dionysius the Areopagite in terms of modern science.

However no attempt at modernisation can hide the fact that for these authors the rot set in with Copernicus, and it's been downhill ever since. Though Sheldrake is a biologist he really doesn't like science or scientists, and we get the familiar rants about 'mechanistic' and 'materialistic' science. Fox, the theologian, sets out to be marginally more conciliatory and at times has to concede that the opinions of their medieval heroes were not always, well, 'politically correct' by today's nice, warm, green standards. They do not however fully take on board that in the middle ages they would have been regarded as heretics and burnt at the

stake. Nor do they seem to be willing to accept that the disenchantment with nature, which they deplore, was not a product of materialism, but of trends within the Judaeo-Christian tradition which emphasised the transcendence of God and the powers He had given to mankind over profane nature. Indeed, early 'materialistic' scientists, with their awe of the natural world often sought to re-sacralise nature.

Angels ceased to be central to Christian thought as hierarchical feudal societies, in which the monarch's power filtered down through layers of feudal tenants, gave way to a centralised state in which mediating forces between the king and his subjects were removed. Heaven, always created in the image of earthly society, naturally followed suit.

Allan Kellehear.
Experiences Near Death: beyond medicine and religion. Oxford U. P., 1996. £16.99

In this important addition to the NDE literature Australian sociologist Kellehear explores the socio-cultural perspectives. He argues that both reductive physiological and literalist quasi-religious interpretations of NDE fail to take into account the socio-cultural background and meaning of the narratives. He offers a critique for instance of Susan Blackmore's physiological model of the NDE pointing out that the tunnel motif is not universal but rather a product of Western culture. (He could have added that it was by no means universal even in the West until popularised by Moody. I have often wondered if the media talk of Black Holes and wormholes to alternate universes, much in vogue in the mid 70s when the NDE was launched, had something to do with this.)

Kellehear ties the growth of interest in the NDE to the religious and social changes which have lead to the growth of the 'New Age', and suggest that the images of afterlife in NDE narratives reflect an aspiration for an ordered, ideal, utopian society. I think we should be careful about suggesting that these images must reflect current concerns, because they have a long history dating back to the last century. In many ways they reflect the ideal society of reformers of that period; the earnest world of rational entertainment and self improvement.

Mathias Gardell.
Countdown to Armageddon: Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam. Hurst and Co., 1996. £14.95.

This is the first major academic study of the 'Black Muslims' since the creation of the second Nation of Islam group under Farrakhan. For *Magonia* readers the main interest will be in the extent to which popular folklore has absorbed elements of popular culture. In particular, it is the portrayal of Farrakhan as a UFO contactee in the tradition of George Adamski and George Kind. In Nation of Islam theology flying saucers are baby planes which carry messengers of God, and are emissions from the giant mother ship or 'Mother Plane' inhabited by God. This is the same as Ezekiel's Wheel.

Farrakhan claims to have visited the Mother Plane in a vision which took place in the Mexican hamlet of Tepotzlan. In this vision he walked to the top of a mountain where a UFO appeared, and he was taken on board in a beam of light. This UFO, with an invisible pilot, took him to the Mother Plane where he heard the voice of Elijah Muhammet who revealed that he was still alive. Farrakhan then had a 'scroll' implanted in his head, which gave him the commission to lead his people in the Last Days. The information in this 'scroll' was to be revealed when the right time comes. He is then taken back on board the 'baby plane', shown the new Jerusalem, then deposited in Washington, DC in

time to give his final warning to the US Government. On waking he forgets the vision, only to be reminded of it in the great Mexican earthquake two days later.

At Armageddon the baby planes will be used to destroy the Whites by using powerful dynamite bombs. The US Government's 'Star Wars' programme was an attempt to combat this, and the Challenger shuttle was a spy plane destroyed by them.

On a broader level, for those like myself who had only a hazy notion of the Nation of Islam, what is a revelation is just how radically un-Islamic it is, with an ideology of semi-polytheism which one imagines must come close to being the epitome of heresy for devout orthodox Muslims. The doctrine of the physical nature of God suggests borrowings from Mormonism, and possible thence back to Muggletonianism, with elements of theosophy and I AM thrown in.

It is ironic that such a radical anti-Western and anti-European ideology appears to owe more to European occultism and popular pseudoscience than to Islam. Even the movement's racism, which Gardell seeks to gloss over seems to be a transplanted form of late nineteenth century Aryanosophy, with the word 'Black' substituted for 'Aryan' in an almost mechanical matter. Thus do religions of the oppressed borrow from their oppressors. There is an interesting aside on the radical Right's courtship of Farrakhan, particularly such Third Position activists as Patrick Harrington, one time would-be counsellor and publisher.

Michael Stoeber and Hugo Meynell (eds.) *Critical Reflections on the Paranormal.* SUNY, 1996.

This is a collection of eight papers on those aspects of psychical research dealing with survival of bodily death. The contributors are theologians and philosophers at a number of universities in Canada and the USA. Despite its title, this collection is scarcely critical, most contributors being strong proponents of the reality of survival.

Though several of the writers argue as though parapsychology were a radical new paradigm challenging the bastions of the scientific establishment, there is little sense of youthful ardour in these pages; many of the contributions have a curiously old-fashioned feel and could easily have been written 50, 60 or even 100 years ago. There is also a detectable whiff of that mixture of intellectual and social snobbery that seems to be the hallmark of psychical research these days.

Thus, both Meynell, a professor of religious studies and David Roy Griffin, a professor of theology, end up arguing from authority by listing impressive names from a bygone era, and basically arguing 'how can such first-class minds be deceived?' One can point out that members of the intelligencia have believed all sorts of remarkable things without making them true. One could also point out that some of the names listed, Oliver Lodge for instance, were already fossils in their own lifetime.

Stanton T. Friedman.
Top Secret/MAJIC, Michael O'Mara, 1997. £15.99

The front cover describes the author as "Nuclear Physicist Stanton T. Friedman". The author tells us about his early life, his involvement with classified nuclear propulsion projects and how his interest in UFOs began in the late 1950s. At one time he was employed briefly to "back-engineer flying saucers" (!) at McDonnell Douglas under Dr Robert Wood, a scientist with a long-time interest in UFOs.

Friedman soon became a true nuts and bolts ETHer, loudly proclaiming the government conspiracy thesis, and in the 70s coined the term "Cosmic Watergate", which now features prominently in his lectures, articles, papers, books and even a CD-ROM he is totally dedicated to this central thesis, to the point of obsession.

This book is the extraordinary detective story of a dedicated man's quest to resolve the question of the (in)famous Majestic-12, or MJ-12, papers that surfaced in June 1987. Although much was written on these documents at the time, very few ufologists now take them seriously. The majority have non time for them and dismiss them out of hand. Even Tim Good, once a firm believer in them, has now reversed his stance. Friedman, one of the trio who first promoted MJ-12 in the USA, has one advantage: he has done exhaustive research in official libraries and archives (far more than anyone else) for at least 15 years, examining a mass of official documents of every conceivable kind.

His pro MJ-12 arguments look convincing at first. In fact all of them are refutable, but it is most unlikely that anyone, whether scientist or ufologist, will take the trouble to rebut them. To perform this would require a book in itself and such a book would not sell a single copy; nobody gets credit for exposing credulity.

At several places I get the impression that Stan, and of course others, have been taken for a monumental ride over MJ-12, and that Stan was made to look a sucker from the start. For instance, he has always claimed that the double life of Donald Menzel, the only real surprise member on the MJ-12 list, was completely unknown until he (Friedman) began

researching it after the names of the twelve were first revealed to him in early 1985. Since no forger could possibly have known about Menzel's hidden life, Friedman concludes that the fact that Menzel appears on the MJ-12 list is a powerful indicator that the papers are genuine. Menzel's three anti-UFO books were therefore pure deception and disinformation. Friedman never considers the possibility that the forger put Menzel on the MJ-12 list as a try-on, throwing a challenge to the UFO movement - to see how many suckers would fall for it. On page 233 he gives 13 items under Menzel's "connections and talents", all of which were, he says, unknown to anyone before 1985. In fact most of these "talents", such as being an expert cryptanalyst and being an expert at Japanese, are entirely irrelevant. They are only relevant if one is already a committed believer in crashed saucers and the "Cosmic Watergate". This is the crucial point. Menzel's claimed "continuous association with the NSA for 30 years" and his Top Secret Ultra clearance with the US Navy are listed. So is the fact that Menzel made frequent trips to New Mexico on government business in 1947-48, and the fact that he suddenly left a job in the summer of 1947 to join "some very highly classified project" (as told by an unnamed scientist to the author 35 years later). Menzel was indeed a consultant in 1947-48 in New Mexico on classified work for the USAF; it had nothing whatever to do with Roswell or crashed saucers.

The forger had no need to know about Menzel's double life to list him on MJ-12. Had Stan checked on the other MJ-12 members he would have doubtless unearthed similar associations and "secret lives". Menzel's inclusion is thus a complete red herring, and Stan's painstaking research on him to confirm MJ-12's existence was a wasted effort, and an expensive one to boot.

On page 70 Friedman remarks about the "incredible coincidence" of someone before him finding out a date of a meeting between Truman and Walter Bedell Smith of the CIA on 1 August 1950. Only an insider, he says, could have pulled such a date out of the air. Is he really so naive as not to twig that another ufologist had obviously done the same research a bit earlier, and had thus put the critical date on the MJ-12 papers? Moreover,

He has done exhaustive research in official libraries and archives (far more than anyone else) for at least 15 years, examining a mass of official documents of every conceivable kind



I think Friedman knows full well who that person is. No it was *not* an insider or indeed anyone within the intelligence community.

On page 24 we learn that Bill Moore, soon after initially receiving the MJ-12 stuff in December 1984, read out the names of the 12 over the phone to Friedman. Friedman then immediately called to mind Wilbert Smith's self-styled "Top Secret" memo of November 1950 naming Vannevar Bush, which related how UFOs were supposedly classified higher than the H-Bomb; Stan then realised how all the names bar one (Menzel) were perfectly fitted for the MJ-12 task. Everything seemed to fall into place; the "Cosmic Watergate" was thus confirmed. A less gullible researcher, not obsessed with conspiracy mania, would have realised at once that the appearance of Bush, and others, on the list pointed the opposite way, namely that a clever ufologist had used the Smith memo as a starting point and then built up an elaborate forgery from it (as I showed in *Orbiter* and *UFO Brigandia* in 1990). Friedman knows full well that the Smith memo was circulating within UFO circles long before 1984, since it was he who first distributed it.

Similarly, General Twining's "sudden" departure for New Mexico during the period of the Roswell crash is taken as virtual proof that he was heavily involved with this incident (page 42). There is a perfectly simple explanation for Twining's presence in New Mexico at the time (which, like Menzel, was nowhere near Roswell), as Robert Todd has shown. A document has been found giving the answer and this was mentioned in the 1994 USAF Roswell Report, but Stan Friedman chooses to ignore it.

The Truman signature? It was Stan who first drew attention in 1987 to its remarkable similarity to a signature on another, genuine, Truman memo (without displaying it for comparison). He avoided saying how he had located this memo long before 1984 and had given it to Bill Moore. In 1989 when the genuine memo was finally rediscovered (by Phil Klass) Friedman went overboard to persuade everyone that the two signatures were not alike after all!

The Robert Cutler memo, by virtue of its identical phraseology to an earlier, genuine Cutler memo, is likewise paraded as genuine when all that has happened is that once again

the same clever ufologist, who had got hold of the original memo (most probably directly from Friedman), simply reused the Cutler phrase to make the phoney memo look authentic.

Friedman totally ignores the hard evidence showing that Admiral Hillenkoetter, after quitting NICAP and after reading Menzel's second book, had virtually become a UFO sceptic by 1963. He even wrote to Menzel thanking him for the book and congratulating him on its contents; addressing him as "Dr Menzel" and signing himself "R.H. Hillenkoetter". In fact the two men scarcely knew each other. Some actions for a man who knew all about the Roswell crash and served as a close buddy to Menzel on the same top secret committee for 16 years!

One can go on and on. The conclusion is always the same, i.e. whenever an "unusual" coincidence of dates, names or events is found it is taken as further evidence of MJ-12's validity. The obsession with conspiracy and cover-ups is so ingrained in the author that I suspect that even if the forger were to make a public confession, Friedman would claim it was all a disinformation plot by the CIA, NSA or whatever.

On page 143 Friedman lists what he calls his top ten "debunker principles of logic". All without exception could equally well be described as "believer principles of logic". Moreover in the book Stan is clearly guilty of employing (or misusing) every one of his own principles.

Some further MJ-12 documents have appeared since the "big three" were released in 1987, including a hilarious 30-page "Group Operations Manual". And how did it arrive? Anonymously on a roll of 35 mm film, exactly as the original documents! Friedman says research on this "awaits funding". The only certain thing that can be said about it is that it is all destined for the garbage can of ufological "junk mail".

To give him credit, Stan Friedman has little time for Bob Lazar and the Area 51 tales. Nor does he have any faith in the Santilli autopsy film. Roswell is different - the greatest story of all time. There were two crashes, not one. And the truth will out, probably by the millennium. Funny, but I have heard that the truth about alien abductions is also expected at about that time.

Roll on 2001. Arthur C. Clarke, are you listening? Christopher Allen

HOLD THE BACK PAGE



Satanism in the Suburbs

White Magic, an autobiography of the famous conjuror Jasper Maskelyn, published in 1936, gives an interesting historical perspective on contemporary stories of Satanism in the suburbs. Maskelyne tells of a fellow conjuror who collapsed during a stage performance and later committed suicide. Reports said he was suffering from ill health and overwork. Maskelyn, of course, knew the 'real reason': he had joined a sect of 'devil worshippers' in the hope of learning some new tricks to use on stage. "If ever a man was a martyr to his art, that illusionist was the one!", Maskelyn declaims.

The first meetings of the sect were innocuous, but before long he was drawn into deeper things including a Witches Sabbath at which "filthy blasphemies took place which cannot be described in a decent book". Typically, these ceremonies included "several people of a national reputation.. including a banker, a famous film actress and two leading financiers." Any offers as to identities?

After revealing these events to a horrified Maskelyn, his friend revealed that the next meeting he was to attend would take place at a house on Barnes Common - just down the road from John Dee Cottage. Maskelyn was determined to protect his colleague, and drove out to Barnes. Hiding at the side of the double garage where the ceremony was to take place, he carefully knocked a hole in the wall with a nail. Through this aperture he witnesses a Black Mass, at the climax of which a cock was sacrificed and the participants

"flung off their cloaks, stepping forward naked, and licking at the blood of the still-flapping bird."

Maskelyn left after this, as in fact his friend had not turned up to the event. However as Maskelyn discovered the next day this was because he had committed suicide that very morning. Maskelyn concludes this account with the warning that "our asylums and prisons are fed every year with a shocking number of persons who have dabbled in Satanism and ended in madness or worse. Not long ago a famous detective (Peter Rogerson, who discovered this account, suggests this may have been the famous Fabian of the Yard) stated that Devil-worship was responsible for a large proportion of the crimes against very small children that take place annually".

This seems to be a strikingly close parallel to recent Satanic panics, and we would be interested to learn of any other similar accounts from the twenties and thirties. Incidentally, a casual search has so far failed to reveal the identity of the big house on Barnes Common.

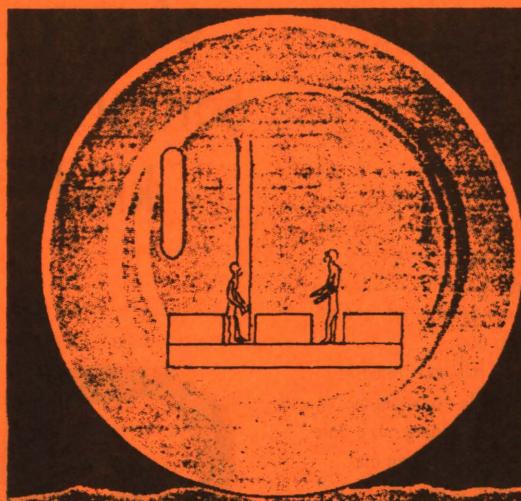
Verbal Abuse

A couple of cuttings which have come our way have reported on children's toys with computerised voices which have started spouting obscene or threatening language. The *Sunday Telegraph* of 23 February pictures Ryon Thompson (5) of Newcastle on Tyne with his 'Silly Sentences' electronic spelling book, which reportedly started "a stream of laughter and expletives". Another report, which seems to have



Separated at Birth

Another remarkable family resemblance is brought to our attention by *Magonia*'s cyber-editor Mark Pilkington. The object in the top drawing is from a 1939 Flash Gordon comic strip (David Kyle: A Pictorial History of SF). The drawing underneath, taken from Tim Good's *Above Top Secret* is of an object reported from the Canary Islands in June 1976. I wonder if they could be in any way related? You bet.



slipped through our fingers, tells of a talking doll which began shouting "Kill! Kill!". In neither case did the reporters say that they had heard the offending item to check just how

audible the supposed message was. This sounds like a new panic in the making. Presumably the Satanic messages will be next. Keep a careful eye on your local paper. ***